

CLAIMS:

1. A method for selecting a file format from a plurality of stored file formats for use in performing a translation from said selected file format to a requested file format, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request for a data file in a requested format; and

determining an optimal file format from a plurality of stored files for use in performing said translation to said requested file format.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining step is based upon minimizing data loss from said translation.

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining step is based upon minimizing the file size of the translated data file.

4. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining step is based upon the requested file format and the available stored file formats.

5. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining step further includes the step of

consulting an optimized list of file formats from which to perform said translation of said stored data file to the requested file format.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein said list is indexed by said requested file format.
7. A method according to claim 5 wherein said optimized list is consulted if the stored data file is stored in a plurality of formats.
8. A method according to claim 5 wherein said consulting step further includes selecting one of said optimized list from a plurality of said optimized lists.
9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the ordering of said optimized lists is based on criterion regarding the translation to be performed on the stored data file.
10. A method according to claim 9 wherein said criterion is defined by the received request.
11. A method according to claim 6 further comprising the steps of:

accessing a portion of said optimized list ordered based upon the requested file format;
determining whether one or more of said listed file formats exists as one of said stored file formats; and

selecting from said optimized list the optimal file format that is determined to exist as a stored file format.

12. A program storage device readable by a digital processing apparatus and tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the digital processing apparatus to perform method steps for selecting a file format from a plurality of stored file formats for use in performing a translation from said selected file format to a requested file format, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request for a data file in a requested format; and

determining an optimal file format from a plurality of stored files for use in performing said translation to said requested file format.

13. A program storage device according to claim 12 wherein said determining step is based upon minimizing data loss from said translation.

14. A program storage device according to claim 12 wherein said determining step is based upon minimizing the file size of the translated data file.

15. A program storage device according to claim 12 wherein said determining step is based upon the requested file format and the available stored file formats.

16. A program storage device according to claim 12 wherein said determining step further includes the step of

consulting an optimized list of file formats from which to perform said translation of said stored data file to the requested file format.

17. A program storage device according to claim 16 wherein said list is indexed by said requested file format.

18. A program storage device according to claim 16 wherein said optimized list is consulted if the stored data file is stored in a plurality of formats.

19. A program storage device according to claim 16 wherein said consulting step further includes selecting one of said optimized list from a plurality of said optimized lists.

20. A program storage device according to claim 19 wherein the ordering of said optimized lists is based on criterion regarding the translation to be performed on the stored data file.

21. A program storage device according to claim 20 wherein said criterion is defined by the received request.

22. A program storage device according to claim 17 further comprising the steps of:

accessing a portion of said optimized list ordered based upon the requested file format; determining whether one or more of said listed file formats exists as one of said stored file formats; and

selecting from said optimized list the optimal file format that is determined to exist as a stored file format.

23. An apparatus for selecting a file format from a plurality of stored file formats for use in performing a translation from said selected file format to a requested file format, said apparatus comprising:

an interface element for receiving a request for a data file in a requested format; and

a translation optimization logic coupled to said interface for determining an optimal file format from a plurality of stored files for use in performing said translation to said requested file format.